

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

In the heart of Burnley, nestled on Colne Road, stood the Tivoli Cinema, a place that had witnessed countless tales of laughter, suspense, and wonder. For decades, it had been a source of entertainment and joy for the people of Burnley. However, its final act was about to unfold.

It was the fateful day of May 15, 1973, when the curtain was drawn for the last time, and the Tivoli Cinema prepared to bid farewell to its beloved audience. The once-thriving cinema had transformed into a bingo club in its later years, but now it faced a different fate. The Duke Bar gyratory road improvement scheme demanded its demolition.

However, the Tivoli Cinema held more than just memories of laughter and movie magic.

Legends whispered through the corridors that it was haunted. The tales of ghostly apparitions and eerie occurrences had spread far and wide. The staff, gripped by superstition, avoided the backstage restrooms, fearing encounters with spectral entities.

Even Mr. Brian Tattersall, the former managing director of Unit Four cinemas Ltd., who had overseen the Tivoli's operations from 1964 to 1968, admitted his reservations. "I have always been a skeptic," he said, "but I wouldn't have cared to venture backstage by myself late at night." While the cinema had garnered a good reputation within the community, it had also experienced rowdy nights during the era of rock 'n roll. Memories of slashed seats and thunderous noise still resonated within Mr. Tattersall's mind. But there were other recollections that brought a smile to his face.

He reminisced about the days when the Tivoli welcomed around 300 children for its Saturday afternoon performances. To ensure their delight, Mr. Tattersall would instruct the projectionist to turn up the volume. The cinema would come alive with the jubilant sounds of young voices singing, feet stomping, and laughter filling the air. Those were the moments he cherished, where the spirit of the Tivoli Cinema was at its brightest.

As the demolition crews arrived, wielding their tools of destruction, the Tivoli Cinema stood as a testament to a bygone era. The once vibrant building now awaited its final act. The walls that had reverberated with laughter and applause were now poised to crumble and fall.

Residents of Burnley gathered nearby, watching with a mixture of nostalgia and sadness as the Tivoli gradually disappeared before their eyes. Some recalled their cherished memories of first dates, family outings, and shared moments of awe within the cinema's walls. Others whispered tales of ghostly encounters, wondering if the spirits within the Tivoli would finally find peace.

With each swing of the wrecking ball, the Tivoli's grandeur diminished, and its memories became fragments of history. The haunted legends and the rowdy nights faded away, leaving behind a void in the hearts of those who had experienced the magic of the Tivoli Cinema.

And so, the Tivoli Cinema met its end, a bittersweet finale to an era of joy and enchantment. Its legacy would live on in the hearts and memories of the people of Burnley, who would forever cherish the moments they had spent within its hallowed halls. As the dust settled and the demolition concluded, the Tivoli Cinema's spirit joined the tapestry of Burnley's history, its story forever etched in the annals of time.

By Donald Jay